



The **ECO-Friendly** Family

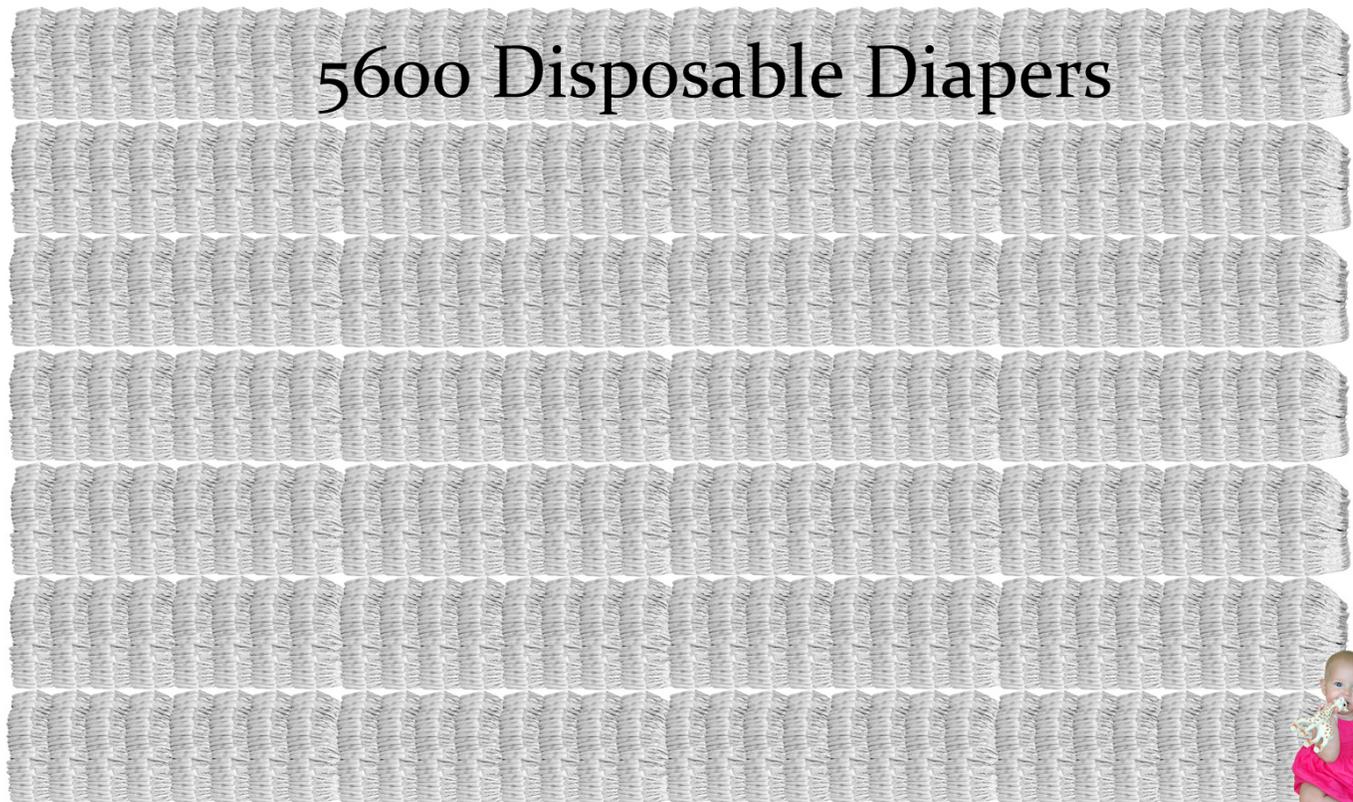
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Congratulations on taking this step towards a more sustainable life. Cloth diapering is not only good for your wallet, but it's good for your baby's health and the environment that they will grow up in.

Each year more than 4 million babies are born in the US. Each child remains in diapers for an average of two and a half years - using 5,600 diapers, which averages out to little more than 6 diapers a day.

Based on the estimated US sales of disposable diapers and the figures above - 4 million babies will use 22.4 billion diapers, costing \$12 billion dollars and resulting in more than 2.5 billion tons of untreated fecal matter, urine, plastic and wood pulp being thrown into landfills in the 2.5 years that they are in diapers.

It is estimated that a single family can save \$2350 by choosing cloth, and that allows for some high end diapers. Choosing a simple option like prefold diapers would grow that number by about \$400. If every child born in a year was cloth diapered from birth to potty training, US families would save 9.4 billion dollars.



5600 Disposable Diapers

That's approx. 6 diapers a day for just 2 1/2 years.

*Each stack is 25 diapers. Scale is to an average 9 month old baby girl.
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Why Cloth?

I say, "Why not?!"

- Cloth diapers are easy to use (as easy as disposables!)
- They work better than disposables (no blowouts! - this is actually the biggest reason I first switched)
- They cost much less overall.
- They can be sold when you're done using them or donated to help a family in need.
- Cloth makes potty training easier by allowing your toddler to better feel when they are wet.
- Cloth diapered babies learn to use the potty an average of 6 months sooner than those in disposables.
- They are absolutely adorable.
- It takes an estimated 500 years for a **single** disposable diaper to decompose.
- Disposables use twice as much water just in the manufacturing process, and up to 20 times more raw materials (like crude oil).
- The frequency of **diaper rash** jumped up 70% when disposable diapers were introduced to the market. This is related to the chemicals in disposables and their absorbing power causing babies and toddlers to sit in a dirty diaper for longer periods.

Let's talk chemicals

Disposable diapers are stuffed full of awful, harmful chemicals. The chemicals in diapers are affected by the wet and warm conditions when dirty. These chemicals should be kept off of your baby, but sadly they aren't. Even after short periods in a dirty diaper, you may notice bits of gel like material on your baby's bottom.

Dioxin, a **carcinogen**, is an extremely toxic by-product of the paper-bleaching process. It is listed as the **most dangerous and toxic of all the cancer-linked chemicals by the EPA** and is banned in most other countries besides the U.S. It is also linked to birth defects, genetic and metabolic damage.

Sodium Polyacrylate is a super absorbent polymer that becomes a gel when wet that can cause skin irritations and allergic reactions as bad as fever, vomiting, and even staph infection. Have you ever changed your baby's diaper and seen little balls of gel? This is the culprit.

A similar substance had been used in super-absorbency tampons until the early 1980s when it was revealed that the material increased the risk of toxic shock syndrome by increasing absorbency and improving the environment for the growth of toxin-producing bacteria.

Tributyl-tin is a pollutant that has been known to cause **hormonal problems** in both humans and animals in lab testing.

Diapering a boy?

In May 2000, the Archives of Disease in Childhood published research showing that scrotal temperature is increased in boys wearing disposable diapers, and that prolonged use of disposable diapers will blunt or completely abolish the physiological testicular cooling mechanism important for normal spermatogenesis.

Okay, so I want to try cloth. What are my options?

My advice is to try a couple of types of diapers before investing in an entire stash of diapers. At the very least, get a good look at some diapers in person to get a better feel for what will work for your lifestyle.

All-in-ones

All-in-ones are the most like disposables. They incorporate cover, insert and closure into a one piece system. These can be found with microfiber soaker interiors or natural options like cotton, bamboo or hemp. These diapers can be found in one-sized systems, multi-size systems (often two sizes that are each adjustable in the way that a one-sized diaper is), and sized systems (x-small through large/x-large). They can be found with snap or hook and loop closures.



Pocket (or Sleeve) Diapers

Pocket diapers are similar to all-in-ones except that the soaker is separate from the cover system. This allows the soaker and 'pocket' to be washed separately. This helps the diapers dry faster too. This type of system also allows for easy adjustments for absorbency needs. Heavy wetter? Add an insert. Not so much? Use a smaller insert. Pocket diapers must be 'stuffed'. They come with inserts (microfiber, cotton, hemp or bamboo) and you will place the insert into the pocket or sleeve and then put the diaper on your baby as usual. Once the diaper is soiled the insert must be removed before washing pocket diapers. If you have a sleeve style diaper (opening front and back of diaper) you will not need to remove it as it will come out in the wash. These diapers also come in one-size systems, multi-sized systems and sized systems with snap or hook and loop closures.



All-in-twos/Hybrids

These systems are similar to pocket diapers except that there is no pocket and the insert is simply laid or snapped into the cover. If the insert is snapped in, you will want to unsnap it before washing. These systems come in one-size options generally available in snaps or hook and loop. The inserts on some brands can be purchased in different sizes - again generally in both synthetic and natural fiber options. Most of these types of diapers are meant to have the option of being used with a disposable insert - making them a 'hybrid' diaper. The disposable option is a lay in disposable pad just like the main soaker area of a disposable diaper.



Fitteds

Fitted diapers are structurally similar to all-in-ones except that they need a cover. They are generally made of natural fibers though there are a few that use microfiber soaker layers. These tend to be more absorbent than their other diapering counterparts. As opposed to one soaker layer, the entire diaper is absorbent. These are available most commonly with snaps but also hook and loop and come in one-sized, multi-sized and sized options.



Prefolds

Prefolds are what you might have originally had an image of when thinking about cloth diapers. They are a rectangular piece of fabric with a thicker center layer. You can fold these into thirds and lay them into a cover or you can use a **Snappi** or pins to fold and put them on baby. These do require a cover to be waterproof. These are the most economical option, are very durable and wash well. These can come in sizes or a large one-size fits all type. Using one-size can create lot of bulk on smaller babies.



PUL covers and Wool

You use these covers over fitteds and prefolds. PUL covers are the modern day version of 'rubber pants' except that they are nothing alike because they are a million times better and do not leak! PUL stands for polyurethane laminate and is almost exclusively a polyester material. PUL covers come in snaps and hook and loop. One-size, multi-size and sized.



Wool is the natural option for covers. When lanolized, wool is waterproof and will not leak. You can make these yourself or buy them. They are sized like clothing. You can find them in soakers (like underpants), shorts, longies (pants) and even skirts and overalls! These come in knit, crochet, machine knit and interlock. These are generally used as part of an outfit, no pants needed.



Soakers and Inserts

These are the main absorbent part of any diaper. These come in microfiber, cotton, hemp or bamboo. Most commonly these are seen in one-sized options that are adjustable, though they can also be found in sized versions. Prefold diapers can even be used as additional soaker layers, either laid in the diaper or stuffed into a pocket. In my experience, natural fibers (bamboo, hemp & cotton) absorb faster and are much more forgiving in the wash.

What else do I need?

In addition to the diapers, you'll want a few extra items to make your diapering easier.

Pail - I recommend a cheap-o trash can. I bought mine from a big box store for around \$8. It works great.

Pail Liner - I started out using a pail liner. I haven't used one in more than a year though. I rinse my pail when the diapers are in the wash. Problem solved and money saved!

Wet Bag - These are waterproof bags meant to store your dirty diapers. They come in all sizes and are great for going out, taking baby to the sitter/daycare or for vacations (large sizes).

Wipes - You will love cloth wipes! Gone are the days of 6+ wipes for a dirty bottom. Typically one does the trick! I recommend having at least one wipe for each diaper you own. (Own 3 dozen diapers? Get 3 dozen wipes!)

Snappi - Using prefolds? You'll probably want to have at least 2 of these on hand.

Diaper Cream - In the event your baby gets a rash (teething, food, allergy, etc), you should have a diaper safe cream on hand. See our Cloth Diaper FAQ (on site) for recommendations for safe brands.

Great, I want some! How do I wash them?

Diaper laundry is so easy. I wash approx. twice a week. It takes about 10-15 minutes out of my week.

1st Wash Cycle - Cold wash cycle with 1 tablespoon of detergent

2nd Wash Cycle - Hot wash with 1 tablespoon of detergent.

You can adjust as needed for your machine, detergent and water. For reference, my machine is NOT a HE machine. If your machine is HE you will want to start out using half of the detergent recommended, you can add more if needed.

DO NOT USE fabric softener or dryer sheets. These will clog the material and cause your diapers to repel pee. You do not want that!

Wait? What about poop?

If your baby is exclusively **breastfed**, their poop is water soluble. Toss it all in the washer. It will come clean! If your baby is on **formula or solids** - use a flushable liner (lay in the diaper - when pooped on simply turn the diaper over and drop the waste into the toilet). You can also use diaper sprayer or scrape the poop into the toilet.

Cloth Diaper Detergent Recipe

This is a bulk recipe and cost about \$30 to make, max. This should be all the detergent you'll ever need for your diapers and is also great to wash clothes in.

3 Boxes Arm & Hammer Washing Soda (55 oz each)

2 Boxes 20 Mule Team Borax (76 oz each)

1 Large Tub OxiClean (96 oz)

Get a large bucket and mix away. I like to use two large buckets and mix back and forth. I have been told by some people that they dump it all into a trash bag and mix that way. Whatever works for you! I have been using this recipe, with success, for more than two and a half years. It's so affordable and it works. If with this detergent, or any other, you find that you have problems with your diapers, try changing altering you wash routine.

Prefer to make a small batch? Use 1 cup washing soda, 1 cup borax & 1/2 cup of oxiclean.

What other detergents can I use?

Allens Naturally Laundry Detergent

BabyGanics Loads of Love Laundry Detergent

BumGenius Diaper Detergent

Charlie's Soap - Some babies are sensitive to this detergent. I've never had an issue.

Country Save Powder Laundry Detergent

Dapple Baby Laundry Detergent

Mountain Green Free & Clear

Nellie's Washing Soda

Original Powdered Tide - I'm told this works well, but this is not an eco-friendly detergent so I have not used it.

Planet Laundry Detergent

Rockin' Green

Thirsties Pre-Wash & Super Wash Combo - best when used with the Super Wash - I loved this combo!

Tiny Bubbles

Keep in mind that babies are sensitive. If your baby is having a rash consider the following:

Stinky diapers (barnyard smell)? You may want to use a little more detergent. Your diapers may not be getting fully clean. Take baby steps, add just a little more at a time.

Ammonia smell to your diapers? This is normal if your diaper has been on baby all night or if the smell is coming from the pail. If it's like this just off of baby you might be using too much detergent and the build-up could be causing problems. Try using a bit less in each wash and/or adding 1/2 a cup of vinegar to your last wash cycle.

Is your baby's rash food related? This is quite common. You might notice that your baby breaks out in a rash after a bowel movement.

If you have tried to remedy your baby's rash and are unsuccessful after a couple of weeks (or at least a few wash cycles) try changing your detergent. Your baby may be having a reaction to it. If you use a rash cream, be sure to choose a cloth diaper safe cream. I recommend Earth Mama Angel Baby Bottom Balm, there are more brands listed on the blog's Cloth Diaper FAQ (you can find this link under our page header).

What about stains?

Ahh yes, the dreaded stains. Well, these are diapers. They will be pooped on, but if you aren't a fan of stains (like most of us) no fear, there is help. The sun! Yes, I said the sun. Wash your diapers as usual and then lay them in the sun to dry, or use a clothes line, and watch those stains disappear! You will be amazed at what a sunny day can do, and don't stop with diapers! This works just as well on clothes. This works best on natural stains (food, spit up, sweat, etc.)

Okay, I'm sold. How many do I need?

The answer is that it depends on how often you want to wash your diapers. Here are some basic guidelines for *bare minimum* stashes, and would likely need washed every other day (a little more if you're lucky!). This is a great start if you're working with a budget.

Newborn Phase - 3 dozen diapers

3 months and up - 2 dozen diapers

My personal preference on the ideal stash size:

Newborn Phase - 4 dozen diapers

3 mos and up - 3-4 dozen diapers

Keep in mind that you can sell the newborn diapers once you're done with them, or save them for your next baby.

Special note for those with more than one in diapers at the same time.

With two in diapers you can easily do 1/3-1/2 less diapers per child. You will wash diapers when you have a full load, which will be sooner than with just one child in diapers.

For more information about cloth diaper, great brands and where to buy, please visit us online at:

cloth.theecofriendlyfamily.com

Thank you for coming, and thank you to the companies below for helping make this all possible!

